(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to make them perfect?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) There are 21 exchanges in Saharsa District and 14 exchanges in Supaul District. All of them are electronic exchanges. These are working satisfactorily.

(b) A number of these exchanges are connected to their parent exchanges on open wire lines, which are prone to thefts and faults. It is planned to replace the open wire lines, by reliable transmission media progressively during next two years to improve the performance of Telecommunication services in the area.

Ahmedabad-Bhavnagar and Bhavnagar-Tarapur Lines

4116. SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VERMA : Will the Ministr of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a long standing demand from various organisation and Chambers of Commerce and Industries for Ahmedabad-Bhavnagar and Bhavnagar-Tarapur broad gauge railway lines;

(b) whether a number of representation have been received by the Government in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof and action taken thereon;

(d) the details of Engineering and traffic survey conducted on the above broad gauge; and

(e) the time by which the construction work on above broad gauge lines are likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) Following Hon'ble MPs and others have forwarded representations in this regard :

(i) Shri Somnath Chatterjee, MP.

(ii) Shri Sanat Mehta, MP.

(iii) Shrimati Urmilaben Patel, MP.

(iv) Shri Dileep Sanghani, MP.

(v) Shri Rajendrasinh Rana, MP.

(vi) Shri Gordhanbhai Javia, MP.

(vii) Shri Narottambhai Patel, MLA/Gujarat.

(viii) Shri Jindra Upadyay, Member/State Parliamentary Board/Gujarat

(ix) Federation of Kutch Saurashtra Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

(x) Amreli Chambers of Commerce.

(d) and (e). The work of gauge conversion between Surendranagar and Bhavnagar, Dhola-Dhasa-Mahuva with extension upto Pipavav has already been included in the supplementary Budget 1996-97 and would be taken up after the necessary clearances have been obtained.

There is, however, no proposal for construction of a new line from Bhavnagar to Tarapore at present

[Translation]

Stoppage of Express Trains at Bina Junction

4117. SHRI VEERENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to provide stoppage to Goa Express, Kerala Express, Pushpak Express and Superfast Shatabdi Express at Bina Junction;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for the development of Bina Junction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Neither commercially justified nor operationally feasible.

(d) Development of stations is a continuous process and the same is undertaken wherever so warranted by traffic needs. Amenities commensurate with the volume of traffic handled has already been provided at Bina station. Work of extension of platforms 3/4 has been taken up at Bina station.

[English]

Indian News Casters Association

4118. SHRI PINAKI MISRA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian News Casters Association has been agitating to Press for their demands;

(b) if so, the details of the demands; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

[Translation]

Small Mine Owners

4119. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the problems of small mine owners;